

WEEKLY COURIER.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST.

Personal and Literary.

—Vice-President Ferry used to make shingles.
—Schuyler Colfax has a lecture on "Abraham Lincoln," which he will deliver this season.
—Miss Anna Dickinson makes her dramatic debut at the Fifth Avenue Theater, New York, after the holidays.
—George H. Pendleton, of Ohio, with his family, has gone to Florida, where they will pass the greater part of the winter.
—Mr. McPherson, late Clerk of the House of Representatives, who retires after 12 years' service, is now engaged on a life of Thaddeus Stevens.

—The American Lecture Bureau has hired Miss Braddon, the English sensational novelist, to do some reading in this country. She will arrive in January.

—Edward C. Marshall, the only living child of Chief-Justice Marshall, of the United States Supreme Court, is a clerk in the Interior Department in Washington.

—The author of that favorite Sunday-school hymn, "I want to be an angel," is now living in Newark. She is Miss Kimberly, a music-teacher. Both the words and the music are hers.

—Postmaster-General Jewell was once a telegraph operator in Akron, Ohio, and Superintendent of the Railway Postal Service Bangs learned the printing business in the *Beacon* office in the same place.

—In connection with the appointment of Mr. Evans to be Centennial orator, it has been noticed that he is a grandson of Roger Sherman, who was a member of the Committee of the Continental Congress which prepared the Draft of the Declaration of Independence.

Science and Industry.

—Foucault estimated the velocity of light at 185,157 miles a second. Prof. Cornu, basing his estimate on the data given by a new instrument invented by him, fixes it at 186,690 miles a second. Fizeau's experiments gave a velocity of 194,212 miles, and in our text-books the round figure 196,000 miles is commonly given.

—There will be an important special exhibition made by the United States Government at the Philadelphia Centennial. It is being prepared under the supervision of a board of officers representing the several executive departments of the Government. A fine building, covering four and a half acres, is provided for the purpose, space in which will be occupied by the War, Navy, Treasury, Interior, Post-office, and Agricultural departments, and the Smithsonian Institution.

—A further step in the progress of the international exchange of animals has just been made in the transmission to New Zealand, by Mr. Frank Buckland, of two nests of English humberbees. The common English clover, which has been introduced into New Zealand and Australia, has not produced seeds in proper quantity, due, as is supposed, to the fact that, as bees perform a large portion of the labor of the fertilization of such plants, the products of the common bee is not long enough to reach down to the pollen of the clover flower, which the humblebee is enabled to do.

—Lined oil, it is asserted, is now frequently adulterated, by foreign manufacturers, with cod-liver oil. To detect this treatment, ten parts by weight of the oil may be mixed with three parts by weight of commercial nitric acid in a glass cylinder, and well mixed by stirring with a glass rod, when it is to be left undisturbed until the oil and acid separate. If cod liver oil is present, the layer of oil will have a dark brown or black color, and the acid will be orange yellow or yellowish brown. Pure oil treated in this way is at first a water green, then a dirty yellowish green, and the acid takes on a brighter yellow color.

—The varied and extending use of paper pulp, at the present time, is illustrated in the manufacture of such articles as water-pails, which are being made in large quantities of that material, and are found to answer an excellent purpose. In the ordinary way of making pails, the separate parts or staves are cut, one at a time, from the log of wood, and, in this process, all the chips and smaller pieces are wholly wasted—that is, so far as the real object of the manufacturing operation is concerned, in producing a paper pail, however, the fibrous material is of course wholly utilized, and, if the original stock is good—as in part it may be—then the large proportion that would be wasted in chips and delgus is entirely saved.

Foreign Notes.

—A London seamstress lived for two years on two shillings (English) a week. She never complained for fear of the workhouse. At last she was found dead in her room, having perished for want of warmth and sufficient food.

—A memorial in the form of an obelisk of Peterhead granite, 21 feet high, has been raised over the remains of Kulloch Rannoch, of Dugald Buchanan, a Gaelic poet of some note among Gaelic-speaking people.

—The subject announced for the prize poem at Cambridge is "The Centenary of American Independence."

Cambridge is the Alma Mater of Lord North, and, as the New York *Post* remarks, the giving out of such a poem for such an occasion is enough to make the old Premier roll over in his grave and groan.

—Col. S. H. Lockett, late of Montgomery, Ala., but now serving with the Egyptian army, writes that all the positions for which foreign officers were wanted are filled. The number of Americans there engaged is twenty, and they are partly employed in the bureaux at headquarters, in Cairo, and partly in explorations in the interior.

—Bordeaux, France, is to be lighted with gas made from cork. Fragments, mostly waste, left after cutting bottle-stoppers, are distilled in a close retort. The flame from this gas is claimed to be whiter and more brilliant than coal gas and also cheaper, while the blue zone is much smaller and the intensity considerably greater.

—A new pneumatic street car was lately tried in England with successful results. Experiments were made to test the powers of the machine for slowing, stopping to take up passengers, etc., and it appeared to be under the most perfect control. The noise was scarcely perceptible, while horses alongside did not seem to recognize the car as any thing unsightly or to be feared.

—The fortune left by the Duke of Modena amounts to over thirty millions of dollars. It will be divided between three persons: His eldest sister, the Countess de Chambord; his younger sister, the Duchess Maria Beatrice, widow of the Infante Don Juan de Bourbon and the mother of Don Carlos; and, finally, his niece, the daughter of his deceased brother Ferdinand, whose death occurred in 1849.

—Victor Emmanuel is said to be very fond of a little six-year-old grandson of his who calls him "the great big grandfather" and delights in repeating, in imitation of the King, the words which that dignitary addressed to the first Parliament which assembled in Rome: "Senators and Deputies, the work to which we have devoted our time is finished. We have come to Rome and we will remain here."

School and Church.

—Messrs. Whittle and Bliss, the evangelists, are holding meetings in the Opera House, Milwaukee. They have large audiences.

—The Presbytery of Japan, connected with the Presbyterian Foreign Mission, has licensed two native young men as preachers.

—After an absence of 13 years in India, the Rev. J. W. Sessler, M. D., with his family, has returned to America to recruit his health.

—The Iowa Agricultural College is in an excellent condition financially, the rentals from the college lands more than meeting the current expenses. A new laboratory building has been finished recently, without exhausting the sum appropriated by the Legislature for the purpose.

—The census of 1870 showed that the value of church property in the United States was then as follows:

Methodists . . . \$99,854,121
Congregationalists \$25,038,928
Roman Cath's \$6,283,396
Ref. Church . . . 16,154,470
Presbyterians \$2,265,236
Lutherans . . . 14,917,747
Baptists . . . 41,968,108
Miscellaneous \$5,000,000
Episcopalians \$6,514,549

—The Society of the Hague for "The Defense of the Christian Religion," has offered a prize of 400 florins (about \$100) for the best essays on these three subjects: "The Relation of Darwinism to Religion and Morality," "The Ecclesiastical Dogma of the Fall," and "The Relation between Popular Beliefs and the Treatment of the Dead."

—Ah For, a Chinaman, who labors under the supervision of Bishop Whitaker, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, has built two chapels, one at Virginia City, and one at Carson, for the use of his countrymen. Unfortunately the one in Virginia City was burned in the late fire. Ah For has the confidence of the Chinese in Nevada, and is said to be a very competent preacher and teacher.

—It is mentioned by the *Congregationalist* as a rather remarkable coincidence, that while the Rev. Dr. Harris, from New Orleans, who was a Confederate soldier, has been called to the pulpit of St. James' Protestant Episcopal Church, Chicago, in the vestibule of which there stands a monument to Union soldiers, the Rev. Dr. Thompson, formerly of the same church in Chicago, who was one of the most outspoken Union men among the Protestant Episcopal clergy during the rebellion, has become the pastor of Trinity Church, in New Orleans. These facts are also important as indicating that the "bloody chasm" is fast filling up.

Haps and Mishaps.

—Mrs. Mary Hurtz, living near Terre Haute, Ind., was burned to death, her clothes catching from a stove.

—The 2-year-old daughter of Henry Edson, of Logansport, Ind., was burned to death by her clothing taking fire from a stove.

—A little 3-year-old son of Wm. Day, of Ashton, Mich., fell into a tub of boiling water and died in a few hours from his injuries.

—James Hendry, one of the oldest citizens of the town of Lamartine, near Fond du Lac, Wis., fell down stairs and received injuries from which he died.

—A young man named Burgess Garner, about 20 years of age, while hunting near Liberty, Ind., accidentally shot himself, producing almost instant death.

—Frederick H. Tyler, aged 22, son of R. D. S. Tyler, of Detroit, was accidentally killed by the discharge of his gun while hunting near Oswego, N. Y.

—At Walton, Ky., Mrs. Harmon, 76 years of age, was instantly killed by the careless handling of a pistol in the hands of her grandson, Columbus Hightower. The bullet passed through the old lady's head.

—Tom Baldwin, a farmer living near North Vernon, Ind., while under the influence of twisted tangle-foot, fell into a boiler of hot water head first and was terribly scalded, all the skin and hair coming off his head and face down to his shoulders. He was a terrible looking sight, but strange to say, hopes are entertained of his complete recovery.

—John Duer, a prominent farmer, living about eight miles southeast of Jacksonville, Ill., accidentally shot himself with a revolver on the 15th, and died the same night. He had been helping at a hog-killing, and, after it was through, amused himself, with others, shooting at a mark. In carelessly handling the revolver it was discharged, and took effect in his forehead. He fell unconscious, and remained so till his death. He was wealthy and much respected.

—Stephen J. Gillespie, a prominent citizen of Dayton, Ohio, was shot under peculiar circumstances. He and several gentlemen were conversing in a saloon, when Mr. Ross, an old friend of Gillespie, picked up an old pistol that had been lying around for five years, and was supposed empty, and playfully pointing it at Gillespie's head, pulled the trigger; an explosion followed and Gillespie fell to the floor with a frightful wound in the head. The wound was supposed to be fatal.

—Some recent suicides: At Urbana, Ohio, Harry Sargent, of the firm of Madden & Sargent, shot himself in the head with a revolver, in a temporary fit of insanity. Deceased has been in poor health about a year. He was a prominent young man, about 30, and liked by every one.—George Williams, of Iowa, Wis., supposed to have escaped recently from the Crawfordville Jail, shot and killed himself in the barn of Ed. Marshall, about 2 miles west of Rockville, Ind. He had on his person three watches and \$600 in money. No motive for the deed is known.—Adolph C. Stein, recently editor of the *Anzeiger*, at Seymour, Ind., shot himself in Cincinnati. He had been discharged on account of intemperate habits.—August Duden, of Adrain, Mich., aged 33, killed himself with strychnine. Cause, unrequited love.—Charles Hock, a German butcher from Taylorsville, Ohio, went to Memphis in search of employment; and not finding it, shot himself.—Jacob Yuber, a Bohemian, aged about 40 years, who was arrested at Racine, Wis., on a charge of drunkenness and cruelty to his family, and sentenced to thirty days in jail, hanged himself in his cell.

Odds and Ends.

[From the Detroit Free Press.]

—"The World's Great Combination of Theatrical Talent" is the name of a Western troupe composed of a lame man, a fat woman and a pale-faced boy.

—The *Courier-Journal* paragraph writes with his left hand. In opening a smoke-house door in the night it is well to push a stick in first and see if there is a trap.

—The late Mr. Astor didn't believe in good clothes, and he was worth \$45,000,000. Those of us worth only a million or so have good excuse now for wearing last year's overcoat.

—A Train of cars on a Florida railroad passed a man on horseback, and there was great hurrahing among the passengers until they discovered that the rule was tied to the fence.

—When you come to Detroit you can easily pick out the solid business men and the most enterprising citizens. You will see them leading little dogs around to show off little blankets.

—Dubuquers are easily satisfied. A stranger has hung up three or four tear-stained chomros there, added a plaster of Paris bust of Grant, and "The Dubuque Art Association" is in full blast.

—As an evidence of the hard times it may be mentioned that a young man in this State wrote to every bank in Detroit offering to be your cashier for \$20 per month and board, and no bank could give him a place.

—A Detroitier got home at midnight the other night with a black eye and a boozy step, and as his wife met him at the head of the stairs she exclaimed: "Why, you've been fighting!" "Yes'm," he meekly replied as he leaned on the rail. "And some one has blackened one of your eyes?" she continued as the tears came. "Don't cry, zharling," he said in a coaxing voice as he put his hand on her head; "if hadn't had a chance to run he'd have blacked both of 'em!"

An Interesting Watch.

A watch on exhibition in the window of Gill & Hayes is one of the most interesting of the Centennial curiosities yet brought to light. It was formerly the property of Augustine Washington, the man who embraced his son because he wouldn't tell a lie, and it now belongs to Harry A. Arnold. His grandfather, living at West Stockbridge, manufactured boots and shoes, and was accustomed, about once a year, to take a trip to Virginia, with a team, to dispose of his production and other barter, and this watch came to him in part payment for a horse. It is an open-faced watch, without a crystal, the outer case being of wood and silver, with a little slide over the keyhole. There is nothing to indicate when or where the watch was made, but it is certainly old-fashioned enough to have the history attributed to it.—*Springfield (Mass.) Republican*.

BOLD ROBBERY.

Daring Exploit of Masked Men on the North Missouri Road—An Express Car Entered and the Messenger Overpowered—From \$7,000 to \$10,000 Supposed to have been Carried Off—Details of the Affair.

[From the St. Louis Republican, Dec. 19.]

Between the hours of 5 and 6 o'clock yesterday morning the car of the U. S. Express Company attached to the night express of the North Missouri Railroad, bound east, was entered by two masked train-robbers, who overpowered the messenger and carried off money and valuables, variously estimated to be worth from \$7,000 to \$10,000. The robbery is supposed to have occurred between Ferguson and Jennings Stations, but it is not certainly known. The story of the robbery, according to the best information obtainable, runs about as follows:

THE EXPRESS CAR.

is an ordinary one, having a door at each end secured by a self-fastening lock and by a chain which is fastened loosely on the inside, so that the door can be opened a few inches, but is still secure. The object of this is that the messenger, when any one knocks for admission, may be able to see who is there before leaving the door unsecured. On taking charge of the car at Kansas City the messenger, Chas. Kincaid, noticed that the chain on the rear door had been rendered useless, a staple into which it fastened having been drawn out, probably by design. The express car was immediately behind the tender to the engine and in front of the baggage-car. The messenger had in his care a large expressman's trunk containing packages, and a safe containing valuables. In the safe was a large amount of money—about \$7,000—and other valuables that may be worth \$3,000 more. Among the money packages was one of \$5,000.

After reaching Mexico the express messenger has no work to do, as the train makes no stops at small stations, and, being a night train, had little except through express matter. As soon therefore as the train pulled out of Mexico the messenger prepared to take the rest of the trip easily. He says he placed a box against the door to make it more secure, on account of the inefficiency of the chain, and then lay down to take a nap before reaching the end of the run. He immediately fell into a doze and continued napping until the train reached St. Charles, where he got up and put some wood in the stove. This done, he lay down again and went to sleep. How long he slept he does not know. It could not have been long, as St. Charles is not far distant. His awakening, however, was by no means a pleasant one. He says he neither noticed nor heard any thing unusual until he felt a heavy hand on his collar. He opened his eyes and was somewhat bewildered to see two men standing over him. One of the men had

A REVOLVER IN EACH HAND.

both looking the messenger square in the eyes. The other man had a revolver in one hand while with the other he held Kincaid by the coat collar. Neither spoke, but a sturdy pull at the collar made the messenger stand up. Both men wore masks of black cloth and both wore short heavy top coats, buttoned tightly up to the chin. Convinced that it would be perfectly useless to resist, the messenger remained perfectly passive in the hands of his captors. They kept briskly at work, evidently having no intention of losing any time. One of the men still held him by the collar, while the other went through his pockets and secured possession of his keys. Having obtained the keys, the robber immediately unlocked and opened the large messenger's trunk which contained part of the packages in Kincaid's care. These he quickly emptied out on the car floor, and Kincaid, who was standing by watching the whole proceeding, suddenly found himself jerked around against and into the big trunk. When he was well in one of the robbers put a single package into the trunk "for a pillow," Kincaid says, after which the cover was shut down and carefully secured by the strong straps with which it is bound.

THE IMPRISONED MESSENGER.

was thus at liberty to take things easy again and continue his nap if he chose, though it is hardly necessary to say that he didn't choose. Of the subsequent movements of the robbers of course Kincaid knows nothing beyond what is indicated by the traces they left behind.

When the train arrived at the Biddle Street Depot, it was of course noticed that Kincaid did not appear as usual. The car was locked, and no answer could be obtained from any one inside. Finally a key was procured, and on entering the car the employees of the company found every thing in nearly good order except that the contents of the package-chest were scattered on the floor. A few faint cries from the interior of the big trunk called them to more fully appreciate the situation, and then they saw that the car had indeed been robbed. They opened the chest and released Kincaid from his confinement. He was pretty well smothered, but soon came around all right. He had been very carefully handled, and didn't show a scratch of any kind. The robbers had carried off the keys with them, but the safe was taken immediately to the office of the company where it was opened and found to have been plundered of all its valuables. The express company are not very free to tell exactly what is missing from the safe, but it is reported to have contained as high as \$12,000. Of course, the detectives are at work on the job, but they don't seem especially confident of catching the thieves.

—The London *Examiner* likens Bret Harte to Defoe.

In Suspense.

"You are about to witness Monsieur G.'s ascension," said a gentleman to me, as I entered the inclosure devoted to the aeronautic display. He was an entire stranger to me; but not being superstitious in matters of etiquette, as we might suppose "a gentleman of distinction" to be, I did not object to this brusque mode of introduction, and so civilly answered "Yes."

"But I shall go further to see it than you will," continued the gentleman; "I intend to ascend with Monsieur G."

"You may go further and fare worse," said I.

"You are pleased to be witty," said he; "but I intend to make some examination of those upper regions for myself—to ascertain whether the stars celestial are on duty during the day, or whether theirs is as much a sinecure as the office of our 'stars' terrestrial. Would you like to ascend with us?"

"No, thank you kindly," said I; "in getting into the clouds one might lose one's self—the way is likely to be mist! Every one to his taste; the earth has such charms for me that I would not change a spade of it for cubic miles of the blue empyrean."

Vain declaration! How little did I imagine the horrors that awaited me! How little did I foresee my dreadful fate in hanging between the heavens and the earth, a spectacle to laughing men, giggling women, and insensate, hooting boys.

We entered the inclosure. There was the vast silken bubble, puffing out its hollow cheeks like the face of a fat clown when laughing, and rising and tugging away at the ropes as if impatient to leave our society.

"You will not accompany me?" said my friend; to which I replied in the negative.

"Perhaps the gentleman will assist in cutting the ropes," said the aeronaut, in French, which, singularly enough, I understood at that moment, though I never before or since ventured to exhibit my knowledge.

"Certainly," said I, "with pleasure."

"Thank you," said the aeronaut; "please take your station."

He and my friend entered the car. I grasped one of the ropes and awaited the order. In a moment it came.

"Cut!" said the voice.

"No, hold on," said another.

I was bewildered, and did both. When the others cut I did the same, and with the direction to hold on I grasped the end of the rope still near me and "held on." In a moment more I was 50 feet from the ground.

Imagine my suspense! There was I, like a freshly caught fish, dangling at the end of a line, with the balloon representing the float. I cried out to my friend and the aeronaut, but in vain. The spectators below, thinking I was some aerial acrobat, who was about to turn fifty double somersets and then alight upon his feet before them, cheered sufficiently to drown my voice. The parties in the car could not see me. But, by the hat swung occasionally over the side, I knew they were owing to the crowd below. Meanwhile I was swinging like a pendulum before them, with only ten fingers to sustain the weight of one hundred and eighty pounds (I am rather stout), and to preserve me from being thinly spread over the ground beneath, from "larding the lean earth" with my human form divine. What an age of terror! The dome of St. Paul's became a parabol; men became nine-pins; and fine Gothic churches began to look like so many chicken coops.

In the meantime my fingers stiffened, but I clutched the rope with the energy of despair. I had long ceased calling; I had exhausted myself. Suddenly a cold perspiration broke out upon me; I knew my hour had come. My fingers were slipping down the rope! Oh! those agonizing moments! Inch by inch I approached my doom. First the left hand lost its hold; and then, as I felt the end slipping by the little finger of the right, I gave one brief prayer and fell—out of bed!

Being, as I before observed, a corpulent man, my fall had shaken the whole house, and the alarmed inmates, aroused from "sweet slumbers," were knocking violently at the door, which had the effect of restoring me to consciousness, when I discovered that my "terrific balloon ascent" was nothing more than a nightmare, superinduced, I am led to believe, by the festivities usual on Christmas day, in which I may say I indulged somewhat—No! I will not betray my friends; but allow me to tell you that such a dinner as they gave is not to be sneezed at.—*Boston Times*.

Discovery of the Ruins of an Ancient City.

The Cronstadt *Messenger* announces that during the reconnaissance recently effected in the Steppes by the Russian troops of the Transcaspien section they discovered the ruins of an ancient city, the existence of which was hitherto unknown. From what is reported the remains prove that the place possessed a large sedentary population. Several minarets of Arabic architecture were found in a very good state of preservation, owing to their remarkably solid construction. The inscriptions which are found on many of those ruins were copied by the officers of the expeditionary column, and have been submitted to the examination of competent Orientalists. The site of the unknown city bears the traces of a vast system of irrigation, and a plentiful supply of drinkable water is found there. A tradition of the Turcomans is to the effect that this country was formerly very fertile, and was watered by a canal from the River Atzek.